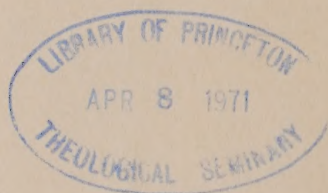



BT
885
.W4775a



BT 885 .W477



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

THE



Apostle Paul

AND THE

“Any-Moment” Theory.

— BY —

✓
REV. NATHANIEL WEST, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA :

JAMES M. ARMSTRONG, PRINTER, 718 SANSON STREET.

1893.

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE "ANY-MOMENT" THEORY.

The great themes of Paul's preaching at Thessalonica, were the First Coming, Death, Resurrection, Kingdom, and Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, Acts xvii: 3, 7, and the development of the Apostasy and Revelation of the Antichrist, in the "Day of the Lord," before the Parousia of Christ, 2 Thess. ii: 5, 6. The eschatology became the burden of both Epistles to the Thessalonians. Wonderful is the wide and all-embracing view of this great apostle of the Gentiles. Old Testament prophets beheld the same perspective, as they sang the glory to come one day to the world, after the besom of judgment had swept the earth. It was no "any-moment" view they took. Our Lord saw the same future. Peter in Jerusalem, Paul on the Areopagus, and John in Patmos, had like visions of things to come, and Paul explained these prospects and hopes in letters addressed to the Churches, at various times, and in none more clearly than in those to the Thessalonians; the first written from Athens, the second from Corinth, six months later. His glances circled and pushed beyond all the horizons of history between the ascension and return of Christ. He foretold the advance of the Gospel in connection with Gentile politics and power, state-regulations, civil govern-

ment, and social order. He saw the Mystery of Lawlessness working already, a deepening Apostasy running, *pari passu*, with the progress of missions and church extension, a "Check" holding back the final crisis for a time, and then, at last, in the very bosom of Christendom itself, full-blown Antichristianity and the "Man of Sin" revealed, to be consumed, and destroyed, by the Breath and the Brightness of Christ at His Coming. He had planted a few small churches in Europe and Asia Minor, and yet the whole future of the Kingdom of God on earth, stood disclosed before him. He learned all this from the Prophets, the Parables, and most of all, from our Lord's Olivet Discourse, now recorded in Matthew xxiv and xxv; a mighty "logos" or "word" that affected all subsequent eschatological teaching. Not personally a hearer of it, as was Peter, James, John, Andrew, he yet knew the "Pillar-Apostles," received it from them, and, familiar with its terms, ideas, order of events, and admonitions, was saturated with them, as though it had been the sole study of his life. It is the mother-source of all the eschatology found in the Thessalonian letters. A half hour's textual criticism is enough to show that the terminology of the Epistles is that of this great discourse. "*Parousia*," "*Epiphaneia*," "*Episynagoge*," "*Nephelais*," "*Anomia*," "*Thlipsis*," "*Apokalypsis*," "*Salpings*," "*Apanteesis*," "*Telos*"—the *Apostasy*, *Abomination*, or *Antichrist*, *Thief-Time*, *Taking or Rapture*, *Watching*, all are from here. And this is the Key.

After Paul's departure from Thessalonica, the Church he had planted became the victim of *Two Gigantic Errors*, imposed upon it by teachers who had misconceived the doctrine of Paul, and as well the current oral Discourse of our Lord; some reporting that Paul himself had taught as did they, and written a "letter" to prove it, all asserting, supposing, inferring, that Paul, the Lord and themselves were in perfect agreement. There was no dispute as to the FACT of the Parousia, or Second Coming. All believed this. But the Errors were (1) as to the SCOPE of the Parousia, *i. e.*, who or how many are included, and (2) as to the TIME of it, *i. e.*, its RELATION to other events, before and during the Day of the Lord, deemed *then present*. It is of the first of these we now speak.

And, here, the great matter of interest centred in what was meant by the "*Parousia*" of the Lord to "*Gather His Elect*." The words were current in the mouth of the whole Church, as a living *Oral Tradition*, and repeated by Paul. We have nothing to show that any one had erred so deeply as to teach, in face of all Paul taught concerning the "Elect," that the "Elect" in our Lord's discourse were "*Jews*" only, for in the "*Didache*" or "*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*," of date soon after Paul's time, the "*Elect*" are declared to be the "*Church*;" "so let Thy Church be gathered together from the four winds into Thy Kingdom. Hosanna to the Son of David! MARRANATHA! Amen." (Caps. IX, X.) But this

is clear, that, in that formative early period of the Church, perhaps before the Gospel according to Matthew had been recorded completely, some persons had taught that the current words, "*Gather the Elect*," "*episunaxousi tous eklektous*," Matthew xxiv: 31, did not involve the *Resurrection* of the saints. Only the *Living*, whether Jews or Gentiles, were to be "*gathered*," and enter the Kingdom; the "*dead*" were excluded; and especially so since our Lord had not used the word *Resurrection* or *Raised*, and perhaps Paul, though preaching the Resurrection of Christ, and of Believers, had not given a nearer definition to the word "*Gathered*;" but repeated it just as it fell from the Lord's own mouth. The Thessalonian believers, misled by false teachers, were smitten with inconsolable sorrow for their departed ones. All that was left now was to muse mournfully on the past, think hopelessly of the future, live sadly in the present, and, with gloomy faces, gaze on sepulchral inscriptions graven on the tombs of the heathen dead. *Æschylus* was their gospel. "*Death is an everlasting sleep!*" They sorrowed "like the rest who had no hope." They feared to *die!*

How Paul corrected this false teaching, we know. His immortal answer is recorded in 1 Thess. iv: 13-18; a broken alabaster-box. The "Comfort" he poured, like balm, into the hearts of the sorrowing, was this—the ONENESS OF ALL BELIEVERS WITH CHRIST, their personal identification with Him, not only in His *Death* and *Burial*

but in His *Resurrection* and His *Crown*. It is the sweet doctrine of the "Head and Members," the "One Body," the "You in Me and I in You," the unsunderable unity and joint-participation of all Believers in the fulness and perfection of Christ's redeeming work for the body as well as the soul, and to all eternity! All heaven is in the Apostle's accent; the ointment of spikenard is there, the perfume the holy women brought on Sunday morning to the grave of Jesus, the aroma of sanctified sympathy, the low undertone and soft melody of tenderness and holiness, of whispered love, comfort and hope. "*If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also, laid to sleep through Jesus, will God bring WITH Him.*"* Already, in covenant, they were "brought with Him," for they were "*in Him*" who is the "Resurrection and the Life," but hereafter, they shall be "brought," literally "from the dead," as Christ was "brought," *i. e.*, when Jesus comes; a "*Parousia*" marked by peculiar accompaniments, the "*Clouds*," the "*Angels*," the "*Trumpet*," the "*Gathering*," as the Lord Himself had taught in Matt. xxiv: 30, 31, and Paul repeated in 1 Thess. iv: 13-17.

It is supreme folly to plead that, because the

*The alleged difficulty (Alford) of joining the "*with Him*" here, and in 2 Cor. iv: 14, with a *future tense*, is imaginary. Paul does not teach that we actually *rose* with Christ in the past, or that He *will rise* with us in the future. The "*with*" is not temporal, but ethical, and denotes our *Oneness with Christ* in His Resurrection as well as Death.

word "*Parousia*" is not found in 1 Thess. iv: 13-17, therefore a Time and Events, seven, forty, seventy years *previous* to the Time and Events in Matt. xxiv: 30, 31, 40, 41, *are* found here, and that this Period lies between 1 Thess. iv: 14 and verse 16. This is not exegesis, but the imperial demand of the "any-moment" theory whose foregone conclusion requires this Interval between its "*for*" and "*with.*" The *equation* between Paul's and Christ's description of the accompaniments is absolute, Paul adding only the "Shout" and the "Voice" in allusion to what the Lord did at the Resurrection of Lazarus, and of the "many bodies of the saints that slept," but woke at His cry on the Cross, John xi: 43; Matt. xxvii: 52. And this is fundamental. *Matt. xxiv: 30, 31, DOES EQUAL 1 Thess. iv: 14-17.* There is no chasm of seven, forty, seventy years between the events of these two passages. They are parallel, referring to the same events and the same time.

We must carefully note what the "any-moment" theory evades, viz., that "God" the Father is the subject of the verb "*bring.*" What Paul tells the Thessalonians is that, when the Son of Man comes in the Clouds, *God the Father*, at that time, viz., after the Tribulation, Matt. xxiv: 29; 2 Thess. ii: 3-8, will bring from the dead all who sleep in Jesus, and thus, by associating them with Jesus in His Resurrection, "*bring*" them "*with Him.*" Jesus shall not be "brought from the dead," and those laid asleep through Jesus be *unbrought*! When the Lord comes *with* His saints

(or Holy Ones, the Angels), *for* His saints (the Church), God the Father, by the ministry of Angels, will *bring* the Sleepers from the dead, and so bring them "*with Christ*," not "*from heaven*," but just as He "brought again Jesus from the dead," Heb. xiii: 20. The Sleepers are not in Heaven. The Angels are not in the grave! Paul is surely explicit enough in the use of his terms. He does not identify things different, unite things separate, or sunder and set opposite each other things identical. The *coming* is not the *bringing*. The coming is *from heaven*. The bringing is *from earth*. The two so different, are not to be confounded, and the *coming* and *appearing*, so identical, are not to be parted. The Lord descends from one direction in visible glory, beheld by the world. The Sleepers ascend from another, in visible glory also. The two meet "in the air," "*at Him*," the golden mile-stone of the Heavenly Forum, 2 Thess. ii: 1. The fond error that "*bring with*" and "*come with*" are the same, is found neither in the Scriptures, the Dictionaries, nor the Grammars. It is the first-born child of the "any-moment" theory that snatches away the Church from the Tribulation which Paul declares is her highest honor on earth, 2 Thess. i: 5.

There is no other sound interpretation. What comfort could it be to the Thessalonians to tell them that seven, forty, seventy years after the Resurrection, their already risen relatives would one day descend with the Lord from heaven?

None! The very sting of the sorrow was, that their departed would *not* rise! The very soul of the comfort was that they *shall*! The "*Resurrection out from the dead*," to which Paul himself hoped to attain, was the thing in his mind, Phil. iii: 11, not a post-resurrection descent from Heaven. The verb "BRING" is simply a Hebraism for the resurrection of the body. The antithetic parallelism in the double-membered verse, 1 Thess. iv: 14, indicated by the "Even so" of logical consequence based on the "*if*" of previous concession, settles this, apart from grammar. The "sleep" in the second member of the verse responds to the "died" in the first, as the "bring" in the second responds to the "rose again" in the first. Each is exegetical of the other. And the "for" (the "gar" of confirmation) in the next verse, introduces the whole of what follows as the explanation of what precedes. If Jesus died and rose again, they who sleep in Jesus shall rise again. If God brought *Him* from the dead, God also will bring *them* from the dead "*with Him*." This is the "*comfort*." It is just what Paul tells the Corinthians, "Knowing this, that He who raised up Jesus from the dead will also raise us up WITH JESUS, and present us with you," 2 Cor. iv: 14. The "*raise us up with Him*" is exegetical of the "*bring with Him*." *

* The true reading is not "*through*" or "*by Jesus*"—*dia*—but "*With Jesus*"—*syn*. So the oldest MSS. and Versions, so Lach, Tisch, Treg, W and H, Meyer, Alford, Ellicott, Faussett, Scrivener, Whitney, Riddle, Warfield, etc., etc.

But more. The Hebrew verb to "BRING," one of the most elastic to various uses, signifies to "lead captive," "bear away," "rescue," "redeem by power," "take out of prison," "restore," and in eschatology, "raise from the dead." The idea of force is connected with it. The Greek equivalent (*ago*) means the same. In composition, "*synago*," means to bring *together*, assemble; while "*epi-synago*" means to bring together *at* an appointed *place*. Thus, following the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew, "Thou hast *brought* me up out of the depths—*anagages*," Psalm lxxi: 20; "Thou wilt *bring* me out of tribulation—*exaxeis*," Psalm cxliii: 11. "I will open your graves and *bring* you into the land of Israel—*anaxo*," Ezekiel xxxvii: 21. "*Bring* me out of prison—*exegage*," Psalm cxlvii: 7. So, in the New Testament, "To *bring* Christ again from the dead—*anagagein*," Romans x: 7. And again, "The God of peace, *the Bringer* of the Lord Jesus from the dead—*ho anagagon*," Hebrews xiii: 20. And the clenching passage just quoted, "Knowing this, that He who *raised* the Lord Jesus will also *raise* us up WITH Jesus, and present us with you—*egeirei*," all proving that, in eschatological use, the verbs, *bring*, *raise*, *wake*, *gather*, are convertible terms of equivalent signification.

Now, it is precisely this verb, "*ago*," Paul uses in the future tense, when comforting the Thessalonians. The phrase, "*God will BRING with Him*," is "*AXEI syn auto*," identical with "*SYNAXEI auto*," and means "*bring from the dead*," and not

“bring *from heaven*,” nor “come with *Him from heaven*.” And when Paul refers, in 2 Thess. ii: 1, to the Parousia, the Resurrection and the Rapture he discoursed upon in his first epistle, he expressly calls that Resurrection and Rapture “OUR EPISYNAGOGUE (or gathering together) AT HIM,” *i. e.*, “in the air.” In other words, what in the first epistle he calls our “*Bringing with Christ*” from the dead, he here calls our “*Gathering together at Him*.” THE WORD IS THE SAME IN BOTH CASES; a verb in the one case, a noun in the other. The *Bringing* is the *Gathering*, and the *Gathering* is the Resurrection and the Rapture. But this word is the very word our Lord uses in the Olivet Discourse, Matt. xxiv: 30, 31, when saying that the angels, at the Parousia, shall “GATHER TOGETHER THE ELECT”—“EPISYNAXOUSI,” at the descent of Christ into the air, and ALL of them, at that time, universally, from the four quarters of the earth, the dead as well as the living, as Paul interprets it. Thus Paul stands before us as the interpreter of his own words. He is more. He stands before us as the interpreter and repeater of the Lord’s words in the Olivet Discourse—words the *mis*-interpretation of which had caused the sorrow of the Thessalonians.

And the efficacy of the “comfort” lay in this, that Paul, by dint of sheer necessity, interprets for them the meaning of the term “*Elect*” in this connection, and so annihilates the theory that only the “*Jews*” or the “*Living*” are meant. For nothing is clearer than that the “*Elect*” are they

who are raised and raptured when Christ comes into the air FOR His saints. And nothing is clearer than that these "*Elect*" go through the Tribulation, Matt. xxiv: 15, 21; for it is "*for the ELECT'S sake those days shall be shortened,*" verse 22 (*i. e.*, to 1260 days, Rev. xiii: 5), and only "*AFTER the Tribulation of those days*" does the Lord come to gather the Elect to Himself, verse 29. And these "*Elect*" are no other than the Remainder of the woman's seed who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus," Rev. xii: 17; xiii: 5. They are, in short, the Church of God on earth as well as the Holy Dead, ALL on whom God's name is called, Acts xv: 7—the Gentiles engrafted into Israel's root, Romans xi: 17—ALL of every name who, like the Colossians, are "the Elect of God, holy and beloved," Col. iii: 12. The tribulation through which they shall pass and of which the Thessalonian persecutions were a type, shall be only a "sign" to them that God has "counted them worthy of the Kingdom of God," 2 Thess. ii: 5. Though they fall, they shall rise again, and they who rise at the Parousia of Christ "FOR" His saints are ALL the holy dead—"they that are Christ's," 1 Cor. xv: 23, and not merely a part, as the "any-moment" Rapturists dream. This blots out the chasm of seven, forty, seventy years, by which the Bride is sundered in twain, or part of her called by another name!

And Paul tells us that what He thus taught the Thessalonians, he taught them upon the *verbal*

authority of the Lord Himself. The "any-moment" rapturists have done their utmost to show that Paul's doctrine of the Rapture is "a new and special revelation to him," wholly independent of the Lord's Olivet Discourse, which they say pertains only to the "*Jews*," and "*living Jews*" at that! It will not bear scrutiny a moment, even though some respectable scholars, misled by a false Higher Criticism as to the Origin and Date of Matthew's Gospel, have unwittingly here fallen into error. Paul appeals directly to the Olivet Discourse as his authority. "*For*" (the "*gar*" of confirmation again) *this we are saying unto you* (present tense) *within the sphere* ("*en*") *of a discourse of the Lord, en logo kyriou,*" 1 Thess. iv: 15. That is our authority. Faussett, Ellicott and others slip here for the reason above stated. Far better, Schultze, Volck, Hofmann, Schmid, Luthardt, Koch, and even Jowett, say, the comfort lies in the fact that Paul rests his whole teaching on the very words of Christ. "Paul does not speak of a special revelation to him" (Hofmann). "He finds the Rapture in the Olivet Discourse" (Christiani). "Paul takes his doctrine of the Rapture from the two in the field and two at the mill, and the well-known Parable of the Ten Virgins, using the very language of the Lord—*apanteesin*—Matt. xxv: 1; 1 Thess. iv: 17" (Luthardt). Whether the Gospel according to Matthew was written when Paul wrote, is of no consequence here. The apostles had their memoranda, parchments, memoirs and "*logia*" or

"oracles" of the Lord, besides the promised guidance of the Holy Ghost. The Oral Gospel also abounded. Apostolic *Didachai*, or *Teachings*, were multiplied. The living voice of the apostles, "Tradition" from them, the sacred "Deposit" committed to faithful men able to teach others also, in short, "*Graphai*" or "Scriptures" and the "Voice" together, these were the formative principles that ruled the early Church before the Canon was settled. The appeal was ever to the "*logos*," or "*Word of the Lord*," in opposition to every floating "*mythos*" or mere fabulous story, and to any rumor or letter written by irresponsible men.

The phrase, "*en logo Kyriou*," may well enough be rendered, "by the Word of the Lord," as in King James' version, for although the definite article is wanting in the original, it is good grammatical usage. In prepositional clauses, especially with "*en*," it is the rule to omit the article as much as possible, the definiteness still remaining. But we do not need this. The exact rendering of "*en logo Kyriou*" is "*in a discourse of the Lord*," the preposition "*en*," with the *Dative* denoting the "*sphere within which*" a thing is done (see the Grammars). That the doctrine of the Resurrection and the Rapture are *within the sphere* of the Olivet Discourse is as clear as that the two in the field and two at the mill, and the Parable of the Ten Virgins representing the Events AFTER the Tribulation and AT the Parousia, and the relation of this Tribulation to Daniel's pro-

phesy and the Parousia and Resurrection there, Daniel xii: 1-3, are a part of the very "*logos*" or "*discourse*" itself! Beza was exactly right when rendering "*en logo Kyriou*" by "*Eo ipse loquente!*" "*the Lord Himself speaking!*" The beautiful paranomasia or play upon words by Paul, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," proves this. He says, "*legomen en logo*"—"We are speaking within the sphere of a speech"—"*We are discoursing to you within the sphere of a discourse.*" Every principle of criticism and exegesis throws us back at once on the Olivet Discourse. Paul speaks within the limits of what the Lord had spoken. It is no new or special revelation to him personally. It was known already to "*Us*," "*We*," the whole apostolic college. The phrase, moreover, is simply the Greek of the Hebrew, "*Bidbar Yehovah*," commonly rendered "by the Word of the Lord," and always referred to the spoken or uttered word first, and the written word next. So Salkinson and Ginsburg, Delitzsch, Neumann, and the Bagster Hebrew editions of the New Testament have it.

And what, finally, is the "*THIS*" that Paul says he is saying within the verbal limits of the Olivet Discourse? It is *this*: that the "Elect" who go through the Tribulation and shortened days are not merely "*Living Jews*," and that the "Gathering" *does* include the "Resurrection," the Darby-Kelly view to the contrary notwithstanding; that the Holy Dead are among those "Elect" and are gathered at the peal of the

trumpet and the shout of the King; that, next, the Reaping or Change of the living occurs—one quick swoop of the sharp sickle (Rev. xiv: 14), the separation—“one taken, other left;” that, next, is the “*Apanteeses*,” or Rapture of both to meet the Lord, He *descending*, they *ascending*, both meeting where else but “in the air,” He coming “*to*” them, they halting “*at*” Him, the goal of their love and expectation! “*And THIS we are saying unto you within the sphere of a Discourse of the Lord.*” It is no new thing unknown before, even though Matthew’s Gospel may not yet have been completed. We all have that Discourse. “*We*,” the whole apostolic college, and not merely “*I*, Paul, say unto you!” It is the Lord Himself who speaks. So it is. The Parousia and Epiphany are one and the same, even the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. The “*Great Trumpet*,” Matt. xxiv: 30, is the “*Great Trumpet*,” Isaiah xxvii: 13, the “trump of God,” 1 Thess. iv: 16, the “*last trump*,” 1 Cor. xv: 51, the “seventh trumpet,” Rev. xi: 15, 18, when a “new thing under the sun” shall be seen, the Holy Dead waking to “sing,” Isaiah xxvi: 19, and Home-Coming Israel joining in the jubilee: “Lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!” Isaiah xxv: 6–9.

The *Second Error* of the Thessalonians was as to the TIME of the Second Coming, or Parousia, for the Resurrection of the saints, and its RELA-

TION to other events before and during the "Day of the Lord," deemed to be *actually present*, A. D. 52. There was much in the Historical Situation at that time, to occasion alarm, as many times since in history, and to create a *panic* of no ordinary proportion. The "Signs of the Times" were ominous. It will help us greatly to understand the Thessalonian error and the Second Epistle of Paul, if we ponder the situation. The year A. D. 53, in which this Epistle was written, is almost the bisecting point of the line between the *Olivet Discourse*, A. D. 33, and the *Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus*, A. D. 70, which that discourse predicted, and with which it *seemed* to connect the Coming of the Lord. Paul and the Thessalonians were twenty years after the time of the delivery of that discourse, *i. e.*, a period less than the time since our Civil War, and eighteen years before the Destruction of the Holy City; not knowing how soon it might occur. The literal "*Temple*" at Jerusalem was still standing. The High Priest Jonathan had been slaughtered. Felix was procurator. Claudius, "the holder back," was emperor. Nero, "the wild-beast-pupil of Seneca," married Octavia, A. D. 53, and became emperor, A. D. 54. The Jews were in rebellion, but checked back by the civil power. God's wrath was on them to the uttermost. They were oppressed, and in revolt. Their Temple was desecrated. Lawlessness abounded. Apostasy among Christians increased. Portents foreboding the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and

the conflagration and pestilence of Rome, and tribulations the forerunners of Neronian persecution, and military movements to end only in Jerusalem's destruction, were the features of the times. False Messiahs and false prophets swarmed. The whole history of the period between the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians and A. D. 70, reflected the Olivet Discourse, and was a shadow of still greater things to come. The End of the Jewish age was a *type* of the End of our present Christian age. The Apostles saw both in one. They said "the End of all things is at hand!" "The Judge standeth at the door!" Paul was preaching the Gospel of the Cross and the Gospel of the Coming and the Kingdom. Such the state of things. Judgment lingered not. Damnation slumbered not.

Some errorists, misunderstanding the words of the Olivet Discourse, everywhere current, and taking advantage of what Paul (in perfect agreement therewith) had written in his first Epistle, as to the SUDDENNESS of the "Day of the Lord coming as a thief," and the duty of Christians to "WATCH and be sober," 1 Thess. v: 1-6, had perverted his meaning, and, because of the signs of the times and the tribulations existing, 1 Thess. ii: 14-16; v: 1; 2 Thess. i: 4-6, had taught the Thessalonians to believe that *these* tribulations, A. D. 53, were part of "the *Great Tribulation*" foretold by our Lord, and that the "Day of the Lord" *actually stood in already*, as a *present fact* (the perfect tense of the Greek verb here, "*his-*

tēmi," is always translated as a present). They furthermore reported that Paul was the author of a "letter" to the same effect, 2 Thess. ii: 2. As the Lord had said that His Parousia for the "*Elect*" would occur "*immediately AFTER the Tribulation of those days,*" "*shortened for the Elect's sake,*" it was only natural for the Thessalonians, misled as they were, and affected by the storm-and-stress of their times, to believe that the Parousia might occur "*any moment!*" The very emphasis of its suddenness had blinded their minds to the fact that the "Little Horn" in Daniel's prophecy *precedes* the Parousia, or perhaps they were unskilled in the knowledge of prophecy. Be this as it may, the Church was constrained to believe that the Lord might come "*any moment,*" the Resurrection and Rapture be here "*any day!*" an error into which not a few excellent Christians even now have fallen.* We have no evidence that a definite day had been fixed upon for the Advent. It was enough to teach that "the constitution of the human mind makes it absolutely impossible to watch for the occurrence *any moment* of an event, if another is sure to occur *before*

*The common version reads "Day of *Christ*," but the true reading is "Day of the Lord," as in 1 Thess. v: 2. So *seven* early Uncials, *five* Versions, *ten* fathers and Lach, Tisch, Treg, W. and H. Meyer, Ellicott, etc., etc. Both forms of expression refer to the *same* "*Day*," of two-fold phase, like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, bright for Israel, but dark for Egypt. It is the Old Testament "*Yom Yehovah*," or Day of Judgment and Deliverance. It is the "*Day of our Lord Jesus Christ*," 1 Cor. i: 8; v: 5; 2 Cor. i: 14. Any attempt

it (!)"—a truism no one disputes, but a sophism, as any one can see, assuming the thing to be proved, viz., that the Lord ever contradicted Himself so glaringly as to teach, in the same discourse, that He might return *any moment*, and yet "*delay*," "*tarry*," be gone a "*long time*," and only "*after a long time*" return; and, still more, that before His return, the whole Gospel Dispensation should be completed, and the "*Abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet*," the "*Great Tribulation*," and the "*Obscuration of the heavenly Luminaries*," all PRECEDE His Parousia for His "*Elect*!" Bad as this was, yet the errorists perhaps surmounted the difficulty by teaching that the "*Elect*" meant "*living Jews*" and not the "*Sleeping Saints*," or that "*after*" means "*before*," and what the Lord meant to say, was that "*immediately BEFORE the Tribulation*," He would come FOR His Church, and "*AFTER it*" come WITH His Church, FOR the "*Jews*;" and that Paul had so taught in his first Epistle, by leaving out the word "*Parousia*" when comforting the Thessalonians, in verse 14, so putting the Resurrection and the Rapture, seven, forty, seventy years *before* the Coming *with* the Saints! Be this as it

to make *two* different days out of the *two* variant expressions, or to make a chronological distinction, is unjustified. The "*Day of Christ*" is used specially with reference to the Hope of Deliverance, which, as Principal Hatch, of Oxford, says correctly, "*Comes at the close of the Day of the Lord, not before it, and is the Parousia or Presence, 1 Cor. xv: 23, the Apokalypsis or Revelation, 2 Thess. i: 7, and the Epiphany or Appearing, 2 Thess. ii: 8.*"

may, the Thessalonians were taught to believe that the Parousia might occur "*any moment*" since the "Day of the Lord" was a *present* fact. If not, then the admonitions of Christ and Paul to "*Watch*" were in vain! Doubtless, the error-ists said, as some now say, "There is *no* event known as *sure* to occur before the Lord comes!" (Darby). "Who shall *dare* to say, with certainty, there is?" (Kelly). "The Lord may come any moment!" (Trotter, Pember, etc., etc.). The Thessalonians were "troubled" and "shaken," as well they might be. They believed it! It was no mere sentimentalism! Business was suspended, and the people stood idly expecting the Lord to come "*any moment*!"

The Olivet-Prophecy is a Double Prophecy, and carries in it two parallel lines of interpretation, up to Matthew xxiv: 28, when it passes to the *Parousia* itself. The events of the sixth decade of the first century, A. D. 60-70, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem, were an imperfect precursive and typical fulfilment of the events at the close of our present Christian Age. We need not discuss this. It is the law of apocalyptic prophecy, and we have no desire to deny to Paul's words a primary reference to the near historic horizon, with its Neronian times, and Gentile treading down of Jerusalem. What is important is to remember that the Olivet-Prophecy, Paul's prediction, and John's Apocalypse, all reach to the End of our Age, and that the ORDER OF EVENTS in Paul and John, both reproducing the

ORDER OF EVENTS in the Olivet Discourse, remains UNCHANGED, whether we regard the type or the antitype, the near or the far fulfilment, for it is the *same order* in all prophecy, from Genesis to Revelation.

How then did Paul reply to the Thessalonian "any-moment" error? How did he correct the mistake as to the TIME of the Advent for the Elect? Having, first of all, formally announced the question in issue, viz., "the *Parousia* and OUR *Episynagoge at Christ*" (*in the air*), in their relation to the "*Day of the Lord*," 2 Thess. ii: 1, and repelling the false rumor that he had ever spoken or written a word to induce the belief that the "*Day of the Lord*" was *present* (verse 2), and therefore Christ might come "any moment," he betakes himself, at once, to the Olivet Discourse precisely as he did in the first Epistle, and speaks again, "*en logo Kyriou*," "*within the sphere of a Discourse of the Lord*." He does not need to say so. The fact is patent. And precisely as the Lord began, so does Paul begin, viz., by an admonition against deception. *The very error the Lord foresaw, and warned against, had happened to the Thessalonians!* Therefore, does Paul apply the *same remedy* the Lord applied. The first thing he says is, "*Let no man deceive you by any means!*" 2 Thess. ii: 4. Compare our Lord's word, "*Take heed that no man deceive you!*" Matthew xxiv: 4. It is precisely what we have in the *Didache*: "*See that no man lead thee astray!*" Then, just as our Lord assured His disciples, in-

quiring concerning the TIME and the SIGN of His "Parousia to gather the Elect," their "*Taking*" by the angels, and their "*Meeting*" in the air (see Matthew xxiv : 3, 40, 41 ; xxv : 1, and 1 Thess. iv : 14-17 ; 2 Thess. ii : 1), that a *fixed series of events in a fixed order must infallibly precede that Parousia* for the Elect, and Judgment of the living Nations, Matthew xxiv : 35—so does Paul assure the Thessalonians that *the same series of events and same order must precede the same Parousia for the Destruction of the Antichrist*. This makes the Gathering of the Elect, the Resurrection and the Rapture and the Judgment on the Antichrist at the same stage of the Parousia, without any appreciable interval between. Nothing is more certain.

And *what the Series and Order of Events* that precede the Parousia for the Elect, and the Judgment on the Antichrist? It is only their Number and Relation that concerns us here, not their special discussion. They are

(1) The *Continuance* of the already working "*Mystery of Lawlessness*," held in check until the time for the Parousia of the "Man of Sin," 2 Thess. ii : 6, 7. So Christ—"lawlessness shall abound," Matthew xxiv : 12.

(2) *The Apostasy from the Christian faith*, 2 Thess. ii : 3, 9-12, foretold by our Lord in His Olivet-Discourse, Matthew xxiv : 5, 10-12, 26, betrayers, false teachers, pseudo-prophets, pseudo-Christ, with the alarm "lo here," "lo here !" A strong delusion, also, so strong that men who

depart from "*the Truth*" will believe "*the Lie!*"

(3) *The Entrance of the "Day of the Lord,"* after the Apostasy has become a fact in Christendom. That Day was not only *not present*, A. D. 53, but *could not be present*, except, *first of all*, "*the Apostasy*" were a fact, 2 Thess. ii: 3. This is "*that day*" which is the "*When*" of the "*these things*" foretold in the Olivet-Discourse, Matthew xxiv: 36, and which Paul is here repeating.

(4) *The Parousia of the Antichrist* who sets up the "*Abomination of Desolation* spoken of by Daniel the prophet." Here, Paul prompted by our Lord's reference to Daniel, in the Olivet-Discourse, develops the Antichrist found in Daniel vii: 8, 11, 21-25; ix: 27; xii: 7, and of which Antiochus Epiphanes, Daniel viii: 9-12, 23-25; xi: 21-35 was a type. Paul calls him the "*Man of Sin*," 2 Thess. ii: 8; Matthew xxiv: 15.

(5) *The Great Tribulation* under this Antichrist or Man of Sin. As Moses, Deut. xxxii: 36-43; Isaiah xxvi: 16-19; Daniel xii: 1-3, and Christ in the Olivet-Discourse, Matthew xxiv: 21, all put the Great Tribulation *previous* to the Parousia and the Resurrection, so Paul includes this tribulation in his clear implication that the Antichrist after his own Parousia continues his career *until destroyed by the Excessive Brightness of the Arrived Presence or Parousia of the Lord*, 2 Thess. ii: 8. The whole seventieth week of Daniel, the Day of the Lord, and the *two Parou-*

sias, one of Antichrist, the other of Christ, are here in 2 Thess. ii : 8.

Such is Paul's correction of the "*any-moment*" rapture theory. In the clearest language, and speaking upon the verbal authority of the Lord Himself, he declares that *before* the Lord can come to "Gather the Elect," and "Destroy the Antichrist," THESE FIVE EVENTS IN THEIR ORDER MUST FIRST OCCUR: (1) The *Continuance* of the working of the Mystery of Lawlessness; (2) The *Apostasy from the Christian faith*; (3) The *Entrance of the Day of the Lord*; (4) The *Parousia of the Antichrist*; (5) The *Great Tribulation*. And this is the standing order in the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. How any intelligent interpreter of God's Word can deny that Paul builds, point for point, upon the Olivet-Discourse, speaking "*en logo Kyriou*," is simply astounding! The Thessalonian eschatology, in both Epistles, is nothing but the reproduction of our Lord's words to Andrew, Peter, James and John, two days before His Crucifixion. Paul knew it well, and *proves* that he knew it! The unclouded sun, at noonday, is not clearer than the uniform doctrine of the Bible that THE CHURCH DOES GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION.

But the founders and authors of the "*any-moment Rapture*" have a convenient way of evading all this. In Irving's day they began with their *a priori false postulate*, the source of all their errors in eschatology, viz., that no man can daily watch for an event, not even the most stupen-

dous, magnificent, and awful that can ever happen to the world, *if he knows any other event must precede it!* That posited, the attack was first made on the Olivet-Discourse. They saw clearly that the "Elect" go through the Tribulation, and are universally "Gathered" at the Parousia of Christ under the sound of the Trumpet, Matthew xxiv: 23, 31; xv: 21. Pre-occupied with their own theory, and bound to protect their wrong postulate, their first business was to sweep out of the way all that opposed it. Their foregone conclusion was their guide, the mistress that dominated their whole exegesis. But one course remained to be taken, and that was to bend to their purpose the Word of God, uniting things separate, sundering things identical, affixing new meanings to words, inserting new readings, creating new syntax, inventing new distinctions, multiplying assumptions, and disrupting and setting things generally in wrong relations; all to suit their fond postulate. The first thing, therefore, was to prove that the "Elect" in the Olivet-Discourse means "*Jews.*" The next was to show that by the "Gathering" is *not* meant the "*Resurrection.*" These points were vital. Having done this and, by convenient division of the Chapters, sundered the Rapture from the Gathering, and made the ten Virgins mean "*Jews*" also, wisely reticent as to the *nationality* of the Servants entrusted with the five, two and one Talents, and having quietly put seven, forty, seventy years between the Gathering and the Rapture, *i. e.*,

Daniel's whole seventieth week or more—all Anti-christ's time—they passed on to other fields of interpretation. They took up the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and guided again by their postulate, *adjusted* these to the *adjustments* of the Olivet-Discourse already *adjusted* to the postulate! They said that Paul does not use the word "*Parousia*" in 1 Thess. iv: 14, therefore, the Resurrection and Rapture, verses 16, 17, are seven, forty, seventy years *before* the "Gathering" of the *Jews* in the Olivet-Discourse, *i. e.*, before 1 Thess. iv: 14!! They further said that the "*Parousia* and *Episynagoge*" in 2 Thess. ii: 1, are seven, forty, seventy years *before* the "*Parousia* and *Epi-synaxousi*" in the Olivet-Discourse, even though the same as the Resurrection and the Rapture in 1 Thess. iv: 16, 17! They actually put seven, forty, seventy years between 1 Thess. iv: 14 and 1 Thess. iv: 16. They identified "*bring with Him,*" and "*come with His saints*" as the same thing, making up and down one—God and Christ one—Angels and the Risen Church one—all to save the postulate and consecrate the formula "*for His saints,*" and "*with His saints,*" with seven, forty, seventy years between the "*for*" and the "*with.*" Later on, their successors made a distinction between what they call an "*Unseen Bodily Presence,*" and a "*Seen Bodily Presence,*" *i. e.*, an *unepiphanied Appearing* and an *epiphanied Appearing*, as though "*Parousia*" itself did not involve *Appearing* in every instance without exception, as a glance at Cremer, Thayer's Grimm, or Liddel

and Scott, might show. They inserted the seven, forty, seventy years again between the two. They fortified in later times this first portion by making the words "*escape all these things*," in Luke xxi: 36, mean "escape the *Tribulation*," whereas the account in Luke omits the Tribulation, and springs from the end of the Times of the Gentiles direct to the Advent, overleaping the seventieth week. They say a "Day of Christ" *precedes* the "Day of the Lord," or the "Day of the Lord" is a Period with the Rapture at its *beginning*, and Antichrist's Destruction at its *close*, seven, forty, seventy years between. This makes Paul's correction of the Thessalonian error curious enough, for if he conceived the Day of the Lord *in this sense*, he ought to have told them they were *not* in error, but the Rapture might indeed occur any moment, whereas he told them the "Day of the Lord," and the "Man of Sin," must first come *before* the Parousia. They make Paul speak of a "Parousia" at two different times, one seven, forty, seventy years after the other, and cover the distinction by saying, they mean *two different stages* of the one Parousia, and so sunder the Bride, or call her divided parts by different names. Without one particle of exegetical ground, but to protect their postulate, they make the "what withholdeth," 2 Thess. ii: 6, to mean the "*Church*," and the taking the what withholdeth "out of the way," the Rapture of the Church *before* the "Man of Sin is revealed." Reminded that our Lord says

the "Elect" go through the Tribulation and are gathered at the Trumpet-Parousia, and that Paul has proved the Gathering, at that time, to be the Resurrection, they reply that "*after*" means "*before*," because there has been a "*Secret Rapture*" BEFORE the Tribulation. Their postulate demands it. So, when Paul says that the Anti-christ must "*come first*," i. e., before Christ, they say it means that He must "*come last*," for the postulate requires it! Having done this, they pass to the Apocalypse. Each one of the Seven Churches is made to mean the *whole* Church, and the promise to Philadelphia to preserve her "out from" the temptation that shall try mankind, means not only to keep her "away from" it ("*apo*" put for "*ek!*"), but preservation "*from*" means the Rapture itself, as if Lot was raptured! Then, it ought to be self-evident, that the Secret Resurrection and the Secret Rapture both take place at the close of Revelation, chapter third, for how can the "*Crowned Elders*" in fourth and fifth chapters "*wear crowns*" unless they have HEADS, and have HEADS unless they are RISEN FROM THE DEAD? They are the representatives of the *Risen Church*! Manifestly the Risen Church is in Heaven, not on Earth, seven, forty, seventy years—all the way from chapter third to nineteen!

We need not pursue this theory any further. It aggravates. It is built on a postulate, vain in psychology, vicious in logic, violent in exegesis, contrary to experience, repudiated by the early Church, contradicted by the testimony of eighteen

hundred years, rejected by all the three great schools of interpretation, and condemned by all the standard scholars of every age. It is an assumption, a *petitio*, a *circulus probandi*, a *non sequitur*! Kelly himself calls it an "assumption." It assumes what it professes to prove, and is refuted by every page of the Word of God. And yet, it offers itself as matter of faith to thousands of the best and noblest Christian men and women, intelligent, devout, earnest, evangelical, brave and faithful, who, without a thorough examination, have received it as true!

How much more might be said! We close with a few words again, from a few scholars who deserve to be heard, like others already quoted, not one of them less than a giant in the study of God's Word, and of the soberest and ripest judgment, and all pre-millennialists. "The Apostle Paul puts everything he has to say of the Apostasy and the Antichrist before the Second Coming of the Lord. The word *Epiphaneia* adds nothing to the Parousia. It emphasizes the intensity of the glory. And his words are of special interest and importance to the Church, for the prophecy is given to the Church in order to be a light to her now, as the great developments of the End are about to enter, and the Mystery of Lawlessness works with greater energy. It is nowhere said that the Church shall not pass through the Great Tribulation." (*Letzten Dingen*, 42, 48.) Again, "It is at the Coming of the Lord that Israel is gathered. It is *then* the First Resurrec-

tion takes place." "The argument on the words *Epiphaneia* and *Parousia* is one of the attempts to misrepresent the facts of Scripture, and in which the uninstructed and unwary have been misled." (*Tregelles, Daniel*, 156. *Hope of Second Coming*, 44.) "The gathering of the *Church* is at the last trump, to meet the Lord in the air." (*Fausset in loc.*) "We are to be led through sword and famine and pestilence to that shortened hour of the Great Tribulation from which the Son of Man shall deliver us." (*Birks, Elem. Proph.*, 217.) "The Coming of the Son of Man in Matthew xxiv: 31, is the same *Parousia* we read of in 1 Cor., fifteenth chapter. The Gathering will be visible, and universal." (*Smith, Fulness of the Nations*, 267.) "The Church will be preserved firm in waiting for Christ through the awful troubles of the Last Days, unmoved by enthusiasm or superstition, but seeing and looking for Him who is invisible." (*Alford, N. T., I.*, 241.) "There is no warrant, whatever, for the view that a few only are caught up, or that the first part of the *Parousia* will be unseen. We are not of those who make a chronological distinction between Christ's coming for and coming with, or that there will be a Secret Rapture of the Church first, and a public Epiphany afterward." (*Guinness, Light for the Last Days*, 260.) "Daniel vii: 13, is the foundation for the *Parousia* in Matthew xxiv: 29-35, and fixes the Deliverance of Israel, the Resurrection of the Saints, and the Destruction of the Antichrist, at the same point of time." (*Chris-*

tiani, Uebersicht, 176.) "Be not disquieted concerning the Lord's Coming. The Man of Sin, as ye know, must *first* be revealed." (*Ellicott in Thess.*, 105.) "Some who maintain the false doctrine of a plurality of resurrections at the commencement of the millennium, exclude those who go through the Tribulation from the Church of the First Born, and take from the Church her highest earthly honor of bearing testimony for her Lord during the hour of Satan's chiefest triumph." (*B. W. Newton, Thoughts, etc.*, 116, 211.) "Confessedly, the Rapture is found in Matthew xxiv: 40, 41, and xxv: 1, which is '*then*' (*tote*), *i. e.*, at the Parousia in xxiv: 30, 31, which is as confessedly *after* the Tribulation, vs. 21, 29. Therefore there can be no Secret Rapture prior to the time-point in Matthew xxiv: 30, 31." (*Hebart, Zweite Zukunft*, 78.) "The Return of Christ must be *preceded* and *provoked* by the Appearing of the Man of Sin." (*Godet, Expositor, 3d Series*, I, 97.) "The Lord expressly placed *between* His disciples and His Coming the period of His absence, apparently protracted, with many events that were to happen in it." (*Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus*, II, 449.) "This *tarrying* of the Bridegroom we number among the *many hints* Christ gave that the time of His return might possibly be delayed *very far* beyond the expectation of His disciples." "'*After a long time*' contains another." (*Trench, the Parables, in loc.*) "The Antichrist will persecute the *Christian Church*, so relentlessly that she would be exterminated, did not God

shorten the days." (*Simcox, Rev. Introd.*, 46.) And so a thousand more, among whom are the first scholars in the world, men like Archbishops Lightfoot, Thompson, Wordsworth—men like Westcott, Sanday, Salmon—and all the great German Exegetes.

But God's Word is plain enough of itself. The Darby-Doctrine has nothing new in it that is true, and nothing true in it that is new. The Lord bring His dear children to see "eye to eye," and renew the genuine time-honored pre-millennial faith! The "Apostasy" is all around us!

Erratum. For 1 Thess. iv: 13-17 (page eight, second line) read iv: 14.

DATE DUE

~~JUN 10 1972~~

~~4 weeks~~

~~FEB 2 1978~~

~~NOV 30 1978~~

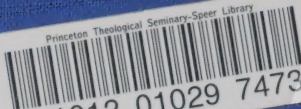
~~AUG 31 1989~~

~~JUN 15 1991~~

~~FEB 1 1991~~

~~3/1/91~~

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01029 7473